

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-27 (Canceled).

28. (New) A process for preparing a low water-uptake precipitated silica, comprising the following successive steps:

(a) producing an initial feedstock comprising a silicate, the silicate concentration in the feedstock, expressed in SiO_2 equivalent, being less than 15 g/l;

(b) by adding an acidifying agent, bringing the pH of the medium to a value of between 7 and 8 ;

(c) in the resulting medium, simultaneously adding a silicate and an acidifying agent, the respective amounts of added silicate and acidifying agent over time being specifically selected such that, throughout the addition:

- the pH of the reaction medium remains between 7 and 8;
- the silicon concentration in the medium, expressed in SiO_2 equivalent, remains less than or equal to 35 g/l;

(d) adding an acidifying agent to the medium resulting from step (c), so as to bring the medium at a pH of between 3 and 6.5; and

(e) filtering the resulting aqueous silica dispersion, then drying the filter cake obtained at the end of the filtering step.

29. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the silicates used in steps (a) and (c) are alkali silicates.

30. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the acidifying agents used in steps (b), (c) and (d) comprise sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, acetic acid, formic acid and carbonic acid.

31. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the feedstock of step (a) is in the form of an aqueous silicate solution, having a concentration, expressed in SiO_2 equivalent, of less than or equal to 10 g/l.

32. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the acidifying agent of step (b) is introduced in the form of an aqueous solution having a normality of between 0.25 N and 8 N.

33. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the acidifying agent of step (b), is sulfuric acid, introduced in the form of an aqueous solution having a concentration of between 10 g/l and 350 g/l.

34. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the simultaneous addition of the silicate and acidifying agent of step (c) is carried out by continuously adding silicate to the medium, the pH being adjusted during the addition by introducing acidifying agent if the pH of the medium becomes greater than a given control value, of between 7 and 8.

35. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the simultaneous addition of the silicate and acidifying agent of step (c) is carried out by continuously adding silicate to the medium, the pH being adjusted during the addition by introducing silicate if the pH of the medium becomes less than a test value of between 7 and 8.

36. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the simultaneous addition of the silicate and acidifying agent of step (c) comprises in continuously adding both acidifying agent and silicate, with concentrations and flow rates calculated such that, throughout the addition, the pH of the medium remains between 7 and 8.

37. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the silicate that is introduced during the simultaneous addition of step (c) is in the form of an aqueous solution having a concentration of between 10 g/l and 360 g/l.

38. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the acidifying agent that is introduced during the simultaneous addition of step (c) is in the form of an aqueous solution having a normality of between 0.25 N and 8 N.

39. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the addition of step (c) last between 15 and 300 minutes.

40. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein an aluminum compound is introduced to the medium at the end of step (c), and/or between step (c) and step (e).

41. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein step (d) is used, and in that the acidifying agent from step (d) is introduced to the medium in the form of an aqueous solution having a normality of between 0.25 N and 8.

42. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein steps (a), (b) (c) and (d) are carried out at a temperature of between 90 and 100 °C.

43. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the aqueous silica dispersion resulting from step (d) is subjected to a maturation step, prior to step (e).

44. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein step (e) comprises a process of splitting the precipitate cake.

45. (New) Aqueous silica composition obtainable by the splitting process of claim 17.

46. (New) Precipitated silica having a water-uptake of less than 6%, obtained by the process of claim 1.

47. (New) A method making use of a precipitated silica obtained by the process of claim 1, as a reinforcing filler in a silicone-based matrix.

48. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the silicone-based matrix is shaped by extrusion.

49. (New) A method making use of a precipitated silica obtained by the process of claim 1, as a reinforcing filler in a matrix based on one or more elastomers.

50. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said matrix based on one or more elastomers is a transparent or translucent matrix.

51. (New) A method using the precipitated silica obtained by the process of claim 1, as a thickening agent within an organic or aqueous medium.

52. (New) A method making use of a precipitated silica obtained by the process of claim 1, as a support in food or cosmetic compositions.

53. (New) A method making use of a precipitated silica obtained by the process of claim 1, as a filler, a support and/or an excipient in a pharmaceutical composition.

54. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a precipitated silica obtained by the process of claim 1.